

## Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 172

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MOSCOW 2561

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: FOOD SUPPLIES: RIGA UPDATE

REFS: (A) MOSCOW 1717; (B) MOSCOW 250

SUMMARY. EMBOFFS VISITED RIGA FEBRUARY 18 AND MADE DETAILED SURVEY OF LARGE CENTRAL MARKET NEAR RAILROAD STATION. SEVERAL ASPECTS OF FOOD SITUATION HAD CHANGED SINCE MOST RECENT REPORT (REF A). BEEF WAS AVAILABLE IN FAIRLY GOOD QUANTITIES, MUTTON AND PORK PRODUCTS' PRICES WERE SHARPLY UP, AND LOTS OF "IMPORTED" FLOWERS AND NORTH AFRICAN ORANGES WERE FOR SALE. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING LONG MID MORNING VISIT TO CENTRAL MARKET, WE FOUND BEEF ON SALE AT MAY STALLS, PRICED AT R 3.50 PER KILOGRAM. THE BEEF APPEARED TO BE OF GOOD QUALITY, AND THERE WERE NO UNUSUALLY LONG LINES OF PEOPLE WAITING TO BUY IT. THE MARKET HAD AN AMPLE SUPPLY OF CHICKENS, WITH LOCAL RIGA BIRDS PRICED AT R 2.80 AND REPORTEDLY BETTER ONES FROM THE EASTERN LATVIAN CITY OF DAUGAVPILS SELLING FOR R 3.20. KOLBASA COST 1.90

2. PORK SOLD FOR R 3.50 AND, IN A LESSER GRADE, FOR R 2.80. PIGS' HEADS, IN ABUNDANT SUPPLY, COST R 2.50, GOOD QUALITY PORK FAT AND BACON BROUGHT A TOP PRICE OF R 3.00 BOTH SIGNIFICANTLY MORE EXPENSIVE THAN IN EARLIER SURVEY -- BUT PORK CHOPS REMAINED AT R 5.00 MUTTON NOW COST R. 3.20 PER KILO.

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3. TWO DIFFERENT GRADES OF MARGARINE WERE PRICED AT .43 AND .35.

PLAIN LOCAL CHEESE COST 1.20, WITH LATVIAN "CHEDDAR" CHEESE WITH LABELS IN ENGLISH SELLING FOR 2.90. BUTTER STILL COST 3.50, AND FANCY PASTRIES RANGED IN PRICE FROM .18 TO .30. MANY VENDORS HAD "IMPORTED" ARMENIAN CARNATIONS FOR SALE AT 1.50 APIECE. LIMITED SUPPLIES OF OTHER FRESH FLOWERS WERE AVAILABLE.

4. SOFT, OFTEN ROTTEN APPLES WERE SELLING IN ANOTHER PART OF THE MARKET FOR 1.50-2.00. GOOD-LOOKING SQUASH COST 1.00. CABBAGE WAS WIDELY OFFERED FOR .80, RADISHES FOR 1.20, SMALL BUT ACCEPTABLE POTATOES FOR .30, CARROTS FOR 1.00 AND GREEN ONIONS FOR 3.00. DECENT LOOKING LETTUCE SOLD FOR 8.00, GARLIC FOR .30-.40 WALNUTS FOR 4.00, POOR QUALITY PEARS FOR 3.00-4.00 CRANBERRIES FOR 2.85, AND HONEY FOR 5.00.

5. THE ONLY PARTICULARLY LONG LINES IN THE ENTIRE MARKET WERE OBSERVED AT STANDS SELLING MOROCCAN AND EGYPTIAN ORANGES. THEY COST 1.40, AND NEARLY EVERYONE WE SAW LEAVING THE MARKET HAD SOME OF THE ORANGES AMONG HIS PURCHASES.  
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